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successfully that when I tore away my spray of ivy many rootlets were left behind.

A very well-known plant is the *goose-grass*, which you have often found for yourselves in the hedges. Many are the tricks you have played with it, but did you ever try to find out by what means the goose-grass clings so closely to any object it touches. If you examine the stem and leaves you will see that they are thickly set with backward directed hooks and it is these which are caught in the surrounding growth, thus enabling the goose-grass to climb and gain support.

The next two plants which we examine climb by means of their leaf-stalks. They are the *clematis* and *climbing nasturtium*. In these cases the leaf-stalk or petiole twines tightly round the object of support and thus bears the weight of the fragile stem.

Another class of climbing plants is even more interesting still. These climb by means of thread-like organs called tendrils. Examine for yourselves the stems of *sweet-pea, field-pea, vine, white bryony and Virginia creeper*. You will find that each of them gives off numerous tendrils which, though alike in delicacy, general structure and function, are yet found to be very different from each other if carefully examined.

The tendrils of the *pea* are formed from leaves—modified leaves, we call them. They are very sensitive, and if you touch one very lightly on its under surface near the curved tip, it bends very quickly.

In the *vine* it is the flower-stalk which is modified. The tendril thus formed is thicker and longer than those of the pea and is, too, much less active.

The tendrils of the *white bryony* and *Virginia creeper* are modified branches. In both plants we find the tendrils much more curved and twisted than those previously examined. The *bryony* tendril indeed, with the exception of a short piece at the beginning and another at the tip, is spirally twisted throughout its length. Notice how elastic the tendrils are. You may pull and twist them in all directions without breaking them. This elasticity is useful in preventing the plant from being torn from its support by rough winds. The tendrils of the small-leaved *Virginia creeper* have at the ends tiny discs by means of which they stick to the walls.

There are many other strange stems about which I should like to tell you but they must wait till another day.

HEALTH CONDITIONS IN SCHOOL LIFE.

PART I.

BY JOHN STRACHAN, M.D.

I HAVE long felt that the teaching and the medical professions ought to be more closely allied than they have been in the great work of making the most of the rising generation. While it is the province of the teacher to equip the young mind with such knowledge as will be required in the coming life, and to impart such training and culture as will best fit the individual for the social sphere to which he may be called, it lies rather with the medical man to maintain health and vigour, and so promote full growth and development of the organism which is the recipient of that teaching and culture. The real and ultimate success of the teacher must depend, not only upon his own abilities, but also and in greater degree upon the organic condition of the material with which he has to work. One may as well expect to win the Derby with a weakly, ill-developed horse, as to win a prize in the great race of life with a body and brain in a like condition. No amount of cramming and training will get a strong mind out of a weak brain, and this brain physique must depend upon the health and vigour of the entire organism during the period of development. Thus it is of the utmost importance to a sound and successful education that health be maintained at the highest level, and the conditions determining health must, therefore, be of vital interest and importance in the management of school life.

The importance of health in education is now recognised by the Department, so far as regards so-called sanitary conditions—as air space, ventilation, drainage, etc.—and suitable arrangements for these are insisted upon in State-aided schools. With reference to such matters, I shall only say that no amount of ventilation, consistent with a due degree of warmth, especially in winter, can render the air of a class-room so pure and invigorating as the open air; and, therefore, that a proper regard for the health of the pupils should lead to as much time and opportunity as possible being given to open-air exercise. Confinement in the class-room is a necessary *evil*, and ought to be reduced to the smallest possible dimensions. There is no provision for this in the Education Act, and it does not, I think, receive adequate recognition in general school management. I am not in a position to say how far the usual six hours are actually required for school work, but they are certainly a large slice out of the time available for out-door exercise. In the long days of summer there may be a few hours left, but, as winter approaches, this gets small by degrees, and reaches the vanishing point at mid-winter, when the class hours, remaining the same, monopolise the whole of daylight. Now this is, I think, the reverse of what ought to be the case. The required time for out door exercise is the fixed quantity, and the class hours should be accommodated to that. The conditions of health do not change to suit circumstances and seasons, while the true interests of education will not suffer from keeping these up to the highest standard. I shall not undertake to say what length of time ought to be allowed for this purpose, but this I will say, that it ought to be a *daily* portion all the year round. There is no greater mistake than to suppose that a weekly holiday, or a long stretch of holidays twice or three times a year, in any way makes up for the lack of daily out-door exercise. The vital purposes served by this are continuous in their requirements, and what is lost to-day cannot be made up to-morrow. Speaking from the point of view of the pupils' health, I do not see that any good purpose is served by such long holidays as are given at midsummer and Christmas. I should be glad to see them reduced by one-half, and the time thus gained distributed over the rest of the year, in affording an additional hour or so of play every day. It is said that the long holidays are required to recruit the health after the work of the session. This may be the case, and the different appearance of some pupils at the beginning and at the end of the holidays seems to show the great benefit they derive from them. But certainly it ought not to be the case, because the health of the pupils ought not to be in need of recruiting as a consequence of school work. If this has a deteriorating effect upon the health, it is not, in the true sense of the word, educational, but the reverse. The weak health of the session must have a corresponding effect upon development, which cannot be made up for. The holidays may check the evil, but they cannot restore the loss. The object ought to be to maintain health and vigour continuously, and for this a sufficient *daily* allowance of out-door exercise is necessary.

The necessity for a sufficient food supply in connection with school work has recently received a good deal of attention, and its bearing upon mental capacity is now recognised. It is agreed on all hands that the ordinary school work ought not to be exacted from underfed children, as such would be injurious to the health and to the brain. On this ground steps have been taken by School Boards in large towns to provide meals for necessitous cases, so that the strength may be kept up to the standard required for the work demanded of them. It must, however, be borne in mind that there are two conditions to proper nourishment—1st, a sufficient and suitable food-supply; and, 2nd, the inclination and the power of the child to eat and to digest a due amount of nourishment. Deficiency in either of these respects must have the same result—defective nutrition, with corresponding reduction in capacity for salutary school work. The former condition is now recognised and, to some extent, provided for; but the latter seems strangely overlooked by educational authorities. If it is wrong and injurious to impose the ordinary school work upon the underfed street arab, it is surely equally injurious to impose such work upon the equally underfed child of a better class who has a poor appetite and weak digestion. We have read pitiful stories of children in the London Board Schools who have to go to school without breakfast, and the remark is made—"No wonder they suffer from overpressure!" But there are many other children of a very different class who also go fasting to school, not from want of breakfast, but from inability to eat it, and who, for the same reason, eat very little at their other meals. Such children, according to the accepted principle, ought to have less work than those who are well fed. Instead of this, I fear it is too often the case that those who work hardest eat least, and that this is a matter of cause and effect. So far as such is the case, some reformation in school management is urgently called for. To secure sound intellectual progress and development it is of the utmost importance that a good healthy appetite and digestion be maintained during the whole of school life, and anything which tends to interfere with this is opposed to true education, and ought to be carefully eliminated. With regard to this I shall refer here to only two points. The one I have already spoken of, namely, too much confinement in the necessarily vitiated atmosphere of the schoolroom, with insufficient out-door exercise, which has a doubly deteriorating effect upon the health and strength. It directly lowers vitality, and, by impairing the appetite, it interferes with nutrition. The other is the time allowed for the midday meal, which might well be greater than it usually is, especially with pupils whose homes are at some distance from the school. To hurry home, bolt their dinner, and hurry back to school within the hour, and then plunge at once into school work, cannot be good either for digestion or for work. A much better arrangement would be to continue the classes with intervals for exercise and time for a light lunch at twelve, till the close of the school day, an hour or so earlier than at present, and have dinner then, with leisure afterwards for digestion.

I cannot better conclude this part of my subject than by quoting the words of Dr. Clouston of Morningside, than whom there is no better authority :—"Mind cannot grow except by growth of brain ; brain cannot grow but through good food, fresh air, work and rest, in proper proportion. The blood will not renew itself properly in youth but by brisk circulation, and this can be got only by exercise in the fresh air."

Having thus considered some of the conditions bearing upon the health and strength of the brain in conjunction with the whole organism, I shall now endeavour to deal with some facts concerning the psychic action of the brain, which have an important bearing upon the principles regulating school life.

It will scarcely be disputed in principle, whatever may be the case in practice, that brain work ought always to be in due relation to mental power at the time of the work being undertaken—that there is a limit, ever varying according to organic condition, to salutary school work, and that action carried beyond that is more or less injurious, and thus anti-educational. To question this is to deny the organic dependence of mind, which few will do in these days. In the adult such relation may be said to be simply a matter of income and expenditure. Whatever power is there is meant for use, and may be expended in brain work. In the young, however, another and very important consideration has to be kept in view. In them not only the present, but also, and more especially, the future have to be considered. With the growing organism a certain proportion of existing vital energy is required for, and, according to Nature, is continuously applied to, the process of growth—a sinking fund, as it were, invested to meet the requirements of adult life. This process is, however, secondary in the vital economy to the immediate requirements of health ; and, in case of excessive action, the fund in question is drawn upon to avoid actual injury to organic structure. In such case growth is impaired, and to the same extent ultimate strength and stamina are curtailed. This is well shown in regard to the body, by the stunted growth, poor physique, and early breakdown of men who, in boyhood and youth, have been subjected to continuous hard work, as in some mining and manufacturing districts, and by the well-known effect of too early work upon the horse. The analogous effect upon the brain is not so apparent to the eye, but there is no lack of evidence to show that it follows as certainly upon errors in this respect. I need only refer to the notorious failure of many hard-working and successful pupils and students to fulfil the brilliant promise of their youth, or even to secure a medium place in the race of life ; in the language of Principal Caird, "To men in every walk of life, who were (at college) the envy and admiration of compeers, yet who have sunk into the ranks of the obscure." I might also point to the great and increasing prevalence of insanity, as showing an increasing tendency of the brain to break down under strain, coincident with increased pressure upon school work, and the adoption of the competitive system of selection for the public services. The prize and competitive method of stimulating to brain work in the young ignores altogether the need for any limitation ; and, with some temperaments, not only exhausts for the time being the force which should be applied to growth, but tends to trench even upon the powers of life, with danger of immediate breakdown, disease, and death. I would beg, therefore, to enter an earnest protest against the practice, unless so safeguarded as to afford no opportunity for that "stewing" or "grinding" which is the bane of school life. No condemnation can be too strong of inducing or allowing young persons, at the most critical period of their lives, after a long and often exciting day's work in school, to work on till 10 or 11 o'clock, or even later, at night in preparation for examinations. We read much of the sweating system in some trades, but nothing in that way seems so bad as what is frequently seen in connection with this phase of school life. There is actually no limit short of the utmost powers of endurance to the brain work which some pupils, of keen nervous temperament, will go through on such occasions. Evening work in any form is, as I shall presently show, of questionable expediency, and ought at the least to be carefully regulated; but such as above referred to is most injurious to health, and simply destructive of future mental capacity. The examination ought to be upon the ordinary work of the school, and not upon the power of special preparation.

(To be continued.)

READING AND RECITATION.

PART II.

BY T. G. ROOPER, H.M.I.

(Continued from page 364.)

THE thing which the word symbolises, say the "red" in the picture of Red Riding Hood, is presented to the eye and so enters the mind before the name "red" is uttered. Then the uttered word or name "red" is spoken before the written symbol or group of letters comprising the name "red" is printed on the board. Begin with an object and use the senses of sight and touch in connection with it; pass on to the name by the use of the sense of hearing; finally deal with the printed sign for the name. Do not commence your reading lesson with the printed word; then give the name, and finally explain the name by reference to the object.

It is an easy transition from writing single words to writing complete sentences, which are formed by questions on a picture in exactly the same way. There is a familiar picture in schools of two girls eating biscuits on the sands. The plan is as before. The class will readily find names for the two girls. In response to the question, Can you think of short names for these two girls? one child will suggest the name "Nell," and another child the name "May." "What have Nell and May on their heads?" "Nell has a cap but May has a hat." It will soon be seen that in making these simple sentences the children learn the importance of emphasis. They will not fail to mark the contrast between cap and hat by modulation of voice. They will practise modulating the voice, and what they do at first unconsciously they may be taught to do consciously, and the use of the voice will be brought under the control of the will. Another advantage of this mode of teaching reading is, that the mind